

THE IMAGE OF GENDER CONSTRUCTIONS IN BEVERAGE BRANDS ADVERTISEMENT

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Abstract

This study aims to construct gender in Indonesian beverage advertising products based on Sara Mills' critical discourse analysis theory through the discourse displayed. This research was conducted with a qualitative method. Where, the source of data in this study was taken from the visual and contextual in the advertisements. These ads come from mineral water namely Aqua and Vit brands. The adverts were taken from the brands' official YouTube channel, which consisted of 8 ad videos. The results of this study indicate that there are findings of the subject, object, and viewer position in accordance with Sara Mills' theory. This research also shows how the forms of gender construction that lead to gender discrimination, injustice and patriarchy that are accepted by women themselves are displayed in the advertisement.

Keywords: *Gender, Gender Constructions, Advertisement, Critical Discourse Analysis*

INTRODUCTION

A. Background of The Study

From all of the mass media in the world, advertising is one of the most famous media. Advertisements are also becoming more interesting to see not only in Indonesia but also throughout the world, which used to be just providing information on a product, now advertisements have become more creative and make anyone who sees it entertained, bewitched, interested, makes people feel happy, and many more. It can also be seen from the country located in the South of Africa. Small et al. (2008, p. 33) found that Qantas and Air New Zealand flight advertisements displayed on various platforms in the South of Africa appeal to an elite minority of air travelers who have the means to live a life of leisure and luxury. Based on these advertisements, the elite people there became interested, thus encouraging them to use the services of that airline.

Meanwhile, in Indonesia Adona (2006: 19), advertising is any message about a product conveyed through the media, addressed to part or all of the community. Furthermore, advertising has become one of the primary consumptions of people, especially those living in urban areas. In addition, advertisements have been stuck in the Indonesian people's souls from adults to children. Because, this can be seen from the things in our environment or around us, starting from billboards that are everywhere, newspapers, cinemas, television, radio, and even it have taken over social media as the platform so that advertising is close to our lives because almost every day we come across advertisements even though we avoid them. Advertising is the structured and composed communication of information, usually paid for and persuasive about the products (goods, services, and ideas) by an identified sponsor through various media (Arrens, 1999).

Even from the past until now, advertisements leave much memory for everyone because they have a strong influence in life, which at first we are only interested by the things that were displayed but could also drift someone's mind into it. People in society are influenced by most advertisements and either buy what they see or talk about what they saw to other people (Easter Bunny, 2010). Moreover, the advertisements that exist in this era introduce their products and build a positive image in people's eyes. Furthermore, many companies of their brand also make pleasing images so people will remember them, but imaging here is one strategy that aims to give a hidden message to their product.

Therefore, in displaying an advertisement, gender is so influential on a brand because between women and men have different meanings, such as masculinity or femininity, so that it shows a different mindset in life. According to Schneider (2005:437), gender stereotypes are male and female subjects showing high agreement about which traits are masculine and which are feminine, and self-assessment is also consistent with these stereotyped assessments. This can be seen in several advertisements for household needs such as mineral water drinks, where men are rarely used as models to present them because in people's minds today, men are someone who has power and position in life. At the same time, women are defined as someone who is at home, cooking, cleaning the house, preparing household needs, educating, and raising children. According to Schneider (2005:437), gender stereotypes are male and female subjects showed high agreement

as to which traits were masculine and which feminine and self-ratings were also consistent with the stereotype ratings."

Representation of women like that in advertisements can influence consumer thinking about gender, which normalizes that all must be done by a woman which will lead to gender construction in it. In this case, gender can be seen as a social construction between women and men based on the reflection of social life starting from the perspective of society and the things that are displayed in everyday life.

And in previous study on casino advertisements where through a narrative and symbolic process, men are depicted as masculine, ambitious, and lucky players. Casino services are legitimized and celebrated. Sometimes in these advertisements, women are also depicted as service staff who serve male players and give them desired gifts and fortune (Zhen Suna & Wei Luob, 2015). This also happens in beverage brands advertisements in Indonesia such as vit ads where women are the models and presenters of mineral water. Therefore, this study will discuss gender construction in one of the advertisements for beverage advertisements such as, Aqua and Vit brands using critical discourse analysis theory from Sara Mills. Because in her theory, she analyzes discourse based on gender perspective; Sara Mills believes that text and images contained in a product can indirectly communicate with people who see it (Sara Mills, 1994). Sara Mills focuses on the position and words of the displayed models because these positions will affect how the media is presented. Therefore, based on Mills' theory, the advertisement will be analyzed into two parts: the subject-object position and the position of the reader or audience.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

1. The Definition of Gender

The definition of gender expands on the concepts of sex between male and female, as well as masculinity and femininity. Eckert and McConnell-Ginet (2003) suggest that sex is concerned with biological elements that are largely connected to productive capacity, whereas gender is the social manifestation of biological sex. Male and female features, as well as people's knowledge of themselves and others as male and female social phenomena, are detailed here. They also demonstrate that gender is a learned trait that is enforced by social mechanisms. Gender in other words is collaborative in the sense that it connects people to the social system.

Coates (1994) defined gender as "showing oneself as a gendered creature." Gender, according to Humm (2003), is a "cultural molding" as well as a continuing, lifelong process, implying that gender is inherently unstable and multifaceted, or "non-unitary." It occurs mainly through various discourses, such as male supremacy and gender equity. It is regarded as a changeable product of a specific context (public debate) and contributes to the formation of that setting's social practices. Gender is defined as a culturally constructed set of characteristics assigned to men or women.

2. Critical Discourse Analysis

According to Sara Mills (1994), discourse analysis is a reaction to established formal linguistic approaches and focuses on choosing sentence forms that do not consider language analysis in their

application. Meanwhile, phrase structure and grammar are more critical in conversational analysis. Critical discourse analyses are more focused on the strength of relationships and ways to shape the production of speech and text, but their methodology has been influenced by linguistics and cultural theory, and they are able to provide more complex models of discourse function and effects for their users (Mills, 1997).

According to Sara Mills (1994) critical discourse analysis is carried out by looking at how the role of the actor is shown in the text and the role of the reader shown in the text then it is divided into two parts, namely:

- **The Position of Subject-Object**

Sara Mills analyzes discourse on how actor positions are presented in the text. These positions regarding who is the subject of the story and who is the object of the story will determine how the structure of the text and how meaning is treated in the text as a whole. The position of subject-object, which is to criticize how events are displayed and how the parties involved are positioned in the text.

- **The Position of Reader**

Moreover, Mills was concerned about the Position of Reader. For Mills, the text is the result of negotiations between the writer and the reader. Therefore, the reader is not considered merely as a party who only receives the text, but also takes part in interpreting it.

3. Advertisement

Berkman and Gilson (1980) advertisement, according to them is a compelling way of communicating that is supposed to elicit a response and aid in the achievement of objectivity or marketing goals.

Advertising is a market tool used by companies to influence customer behavior at the moment of purchase (Sandage, Fruburger, and Rotzol, 1997). It seeks to steer public opinion towards certain items or markets as the communication ingredient within the marketing mix, using mass media, billboards, skywriting, and so on. It is the medium via which advertising messages are sent to the target audience, and consumers' responses to the messages are measured by the quality or quantity of the advertising product (Comanor, 1999).

4. The Image of Gender Construction in Advertisement

Advertising is one of the media used to represent a product among the numerous types of communication used to provide information and explain it. Advertising works by eliciting a reaction from prospective consumers to the items featured in the advertising. This reaction or response might occur when a potential buyer sees, hears, or thinks about advertising. Advertising has the ability to alter emotions, and it plays a significant part in business since advertising is thought of as executing many communication functions (Shimp, 2003: 357). The advertisements displayed can affect people's mindsets, especially in this case is gender. According to Judith Waters and George Ellis (1999), gender is a basic category in culture, namely as a process by which the identification of people and vocabulary, speech patterns, attitudes and behaviors, goals, and activities such as masculinity or femininity. Gender is not a new topic in the social, legal, religious, and other fields. However, the discussion about gender is always interesting to continue or

re-discuss. In everyday life, gender is still often interpreted as the same thing as sex Moore and Sinclair (1995:117).



Figure 2.1 Visual of Aqua 2019 Advertisement

In the 2019 beverage advertisement above namely, aqua where in this scene shows a man sit and wait to receive the service provided by his wife and that woman giving drinks to her husband. And in this section there is a gender construction in it.

In theory and approach to the social construction of reality Peter L. Berger and Luckmann (in Paloma, 1984:307), the media is seen as having a strategic position in society. The language used to provide information by the media is one of the influential social authorities in shaping human experience, both perceptually and conceptually. Therefore, the gender construction in advertisements can make a difference between men and women. Because the process of socialization and reconstruction takes place in an established and long manner, in the end it is difficult to distinguish what gender characteristics are. Like graceful women and men who are strong and mighty, they are constructed or shaped by society or biological nature ordained by God. (Fakih, 1996:10).

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study uses a qualitative approach to analyze data taken from 5 beverage advertising Indonesian products. The main methods of qualitative research include observation, in-depth interviews, focus groups, projective methodologies, and ethnography (Belk, Fisher, Kozinets 2013; Kozinets 2015). Bogdan and Taylor (1975), where it means that qualitative research also includes the methodology used for research procedures that produce descriptive data. Descriptive data are ones written using words in detail. For this reason, this study uses a qualitative approach. According to Corbin and Strauss (2015: 5), a qualitative approach is a form of research in which researchers collect and analyze data become part of the research process as participants with informants who provide data.

The source of data in this study is beverage advertisements broadcast on Indonesian television. Where the advertisements are shown on television are one way to market the general public so that many people see it because TV currently has many users. The advertisement was chosen because it shows beverage products by displaying gender construction in an audiovisual way that has a plot or storyline in presenting the products.

The advertisements on television are taken from a website, namely YouTube. Which ads are re-uploaded

by the brands or YouTube users who record and re-upload them to the website. Basically, YouTube is a website that facilitates users to share their videos or only enjoy various videos uploaded by various parties. Thus, this website was chosen as the source for data collection because there are many video advertisements that have been re-uploaded by various people. The advertisements that will be selected are taken based on criteria that are following the research, namely beverage advertisement products that have gender construction in them. Beverage product advertisements that will be taken include Aqua and Vit. The data used a text that includes words, sentences, and phrases displayed or spoken in advertisements. And from visual images that include the appearance or image of the model who plays the ad.

DISCUSSION

After analyzing the beverage advertisements, namely mineral water from the Aqua and Vit brands whose videos were taken from YouTube, it was found that there are gender constructions in every video in the advertisement.

- 1) Based on the image of the Aqua and Vit brand mineral water advertisement that is displayed it looks very clearly showing that there is a gender construction in it. For example, seen in the ad is a woman who is required to be perfect in fulfilling all household needs without help from her husband. These women are required to follow gender expectations which are meant to be good wives.
- 2) From Sara Mills' critical discourse theory, the picture that is realized in the Aqua and Vit advertisements is found as follows:
 - The position of the subject described in the Aqua and Vit advertisement is a woman who becomes a wife or a mother. All the scenes seen show that a mother is the subject of the story, where she is free to tell about herself and other characters.

Meanwhile, the position of objects in the Aqua and Vit beverage advertisements are other supporting characters such as those who play fathers, children, neighbors, and other characters involved in these advertisements. Where in the position of this object they cannot present themselves, so that what is seen in the advertisement is only their depiction as a figure whose all needs are met by the female figure in their house. And other depictions that corner them as the object of the story.

- For the position of viewer, based on the contextual information presented in the advertisement, the director directs the audience as if to position themselves as the mother figure in the advertisement. Where the director makes the storyline as if the viewer comes to feel the various activities carried out by their wife. The figure of the mother or wife in this advertisement is presented as a character who does everything by herself.

The gender construction that is built from advertisements for mineral water products in Indonesia shows many similarities between one another. Because it is related to mineral water products, the whole advertisement presents the construction that it is a mother who provides and prepares all the needs of the family, such as mineral water. The patriarchal culture is still very much embedded in the life of Indonesian society, where women are

positioned as subordinates under the power of men. This is in accordance with what was stated by Fakhri (2013: 147-151) that the existence of gender differences resulted in the condition of women in unfavorable positions, including marginalization, subordination, stereotypes and the emergence of violence and the occurrence of patriarchal socialization.

The woman or a wife is described as if she is someone who is obliged to take care of her family's health, clean the house, prepare all the needs of her husband and children. These advertisements seem to depict the power of men in the injustices received by women. Gender itself is a trait inherent in men and women whose traits have been socially and culturally constructed (Fakhri, 2013:8).

All of that is displayed in mineral water advertisements in presenting their products in order to influence the community. Starting from the power of men or women, as well as injustice or discrimination that has been accepted by women themselves.

CONCLUSIONS AND FURTHER RESEARCH

Conclusions

Based on the analysis of gender construction for the images of beverage brands advertisement conclusions are drawn as the following:

1. The image of beverage advertisements of Aqua and Vit, shows that there is a gender construction made through the use of language specifically the result shows gender constructions or stereotypes are also supported by some of the behaviors and words used.
2. The image that is realized in the Aqua and Vit advertisement can be seen based on reference to the position of the subject-object and the viewer in the advertisement, also clearly seen in some of the visual and contextual presentation in the advertisements that contain gender construction in them, starting from the male power which is seen in the female personality in these advertisements which is shown to be someone who is gentle, cares about others, loves family, and does all activities in her own home without the help of her husband. And the construction of gender in this advertisement can be seen in the injustice and patriarchy accepted by women themselves.

Suggestions

In line with the conclusions, suggestions are staged as the following:

1. It is suggested that the director who created the commercial scenario better if you want to make an advertisement for mineral water, you should tell the things that happened to the mineral water, such as the source and how to sterilize the water. And it is recommended to reduce scenarios that describe the position of women who are under men, because it can affect women in the real world which can show the gender constancy in it.

2. It is also advised that further studies should be develop the research in this thesis so that it is more contradictory in showing the gender construction in advertisements so that gender inequality can be obscured.

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